



# A Decade of Louisiana SAFE KIDS:

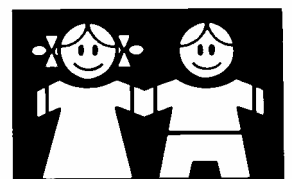
Taking a stand against  
unintentional childhood  
injury in Louisiana

1994-2004



**Founding Sponsors:**  
Louisiana Office of Public Health  
& Children's Hospital

May, 2004



CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL

# Acknowledgements

Data and prevention tips from the National SAFE KIDS Campaign and the Louisiana Office of Public Health Injury Research & Prevention Program.

...and for 10 years of steadfast support, Louisiana SAFE KIDS offers a happy, grateful hug to:

- Dr. Keith Perrin, from Chairman to President and dedicated injury prevention advocate
- Office of Public Health, especially Dr. Gary Peck, Nancy Bourgeois, and Joan Wightkin and the staff of the Injury Research & Prevention Section past and present
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- The National SAFE KIDS Campaign and their fabulous staff who never cease to amaze me!

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# Louisiana SAFE KIDS: Mission & Milestones

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*Louisiana SAFE KIDS, Inc., a coalition of public, private and voluntary organizations, works to prevent unintentional injuries to children from birth to 14 years of age.*

The Louisiana SAFE KIDS Coalition (LASK) began in March 1994 as a joint venture between Children's Hospital and the Louisiana Office of Public Health.

In 2001, the Louisiana SAFE KIDS Coalition became Louisiana SAFE KIDS, Inc. a non-profit organization.

Over the past ten years, our Coalition has grown. We now have three Local Coalitions, who have signed contracts with the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, and seven local chapters. These coalitions are located in Baton Rouge, Bossier (NW LA Coalition) and Lake Charles. We have chapters in Acadiana (Lafayette), Central Louisiana (Alexandria), Hammond, Lafourche, Pointe Coupee, St. John and Slidell.

## State and National Awards

- Outstanding State Coalition, National SAFE KIDS Campaign. 1994
- Traffic Safety Achievement Award, AAA. 1996
- Bell Sportsmanship Award for Outstanding Performance, Bell Sports. 2001
- Outstanding Achievement in Public Policy, National SAFE KIDS Campaign. 2003
- L.I.F.E (Lowering Injuries and Fatalities through Education) award (Kerry Chausmer) Charity Hospital Trauma Program. 2003

## Major Legislative Achievements

- 2001: statewide Child Bicycle Helmet Law: All children under age 12 riding on public roadways must wear a CPSC-approved bicycle helmet. Currently there is no penalty.
- 2003: Improving Existing Child Passenger Safety Law: All kids to age 13 must ride in an appropriate restraint system
  - ✓ Birth to at least 1 year **and** less than 20 pounds must ride rear-facing infant or convertible seat
  - ✓ At least 1 year **and** at least 20 pounds to 40 pounds must ride forward facing in convertible or combination seat (used with the internal harness)
  - ✓ At least 40 pounds to 60 pounds or at least 4 years old to 6 years old must ride in a belt positioning booster seat (backless or high backed)
  - ✓ At least 6 years old or at least 60 pounds must ride using the vehicle lap-shoulder belt or belt positioning booster seat
    - A child who because of age or weight can be placed in more than one category shall be placed in the more protective category.
    - If there is an active passenger side airbag shall ride in the back seat, if a back seat is available (less than 60 pounds or less than 6 years old).



## **Ten years of National SAFE KIDS Weeks**



- 1994** SAFE KIDS Summit
- 1995** SAFE KIDS Check America
- 1996** Family Safety Check
- 1997** SAFE KIDS Gear Up
- 1998** SAFE KIDS At Home, At Play & On The Way
- 1999** Helping Every Generation Care for Kids
- 2000** Get Into The Game
- 2001** Make It A SAFE KIDS Summer
- 2002** Use your head-wear a helmet!
- 2003** Wrap Your Arms Around Safety
- 2004** Splash Into Safety

## Programs of special note

### **Don't Kid Around: May 1995 to July 2002**

The *Don't Kid Around* program, an educational outreach project of Louisiana SAFE KIDS, was an effort to increase public awareness of the need for *increased* use and *proper* use of child safety seats and seat belts. Efforts were targeted toward the actual drivers who transport small children in violation of Louisiana's child safety restraint laws.

When a concerned citizen saw a young child being transported unrestrained, he or she filled out a postage-paid postcard. When Louisiana SAFE KIDS received the postcard, a letter about child restraint laws and child safety seats was forwarded to the vehicle owner.

**Don't Kid Around!**  
*I observed an obvious violation of Louisiana's child passenger safety law (under age 5 not protected by a child safety seat or safety belt). I understand that a friendly reminder and educational materials will be sent to the vehicle's owners asking them to obey this life-saving law.*  
LA License Plate # \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Observation \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ AM PM  
Parish \_\_\_\_\_  
Approximate age of child (Circle one): Less than 1 1 2 3 4 Older  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
 **LOUISIANA  
CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND**  
A Brighter Tomorrow for Louisiana's Children  
 A project of the  
**LOUISIANA  
SAFE  
KIDS  
COALITION**  
THANK YOU FOR HELPING KEEP LOUISIANA'S KIDS SAFE

### **Bike Helmet Distribution**

In honor to the state's Child Bike Helmet Law, the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission has provided Louisiana SAFE KIDS, Inc. and the Think First Ark-La-Tex Chapter with \$30,000 in bike helmets. This annual program was funded in 2002, 2003 and 2004, totaling \$90,000 in bike helmets! All grant money was used to purchase helmets through national cooperative agreements with Bell Sports, Inc.

### **Boost America**

Boost America was a highway safety campaign designed to send the message to parents and children that booster seats are the safe and fun way to ride in a vehicle. With the support of Ford Motor Company and its safety partners, Boost America! provided 1 million booster seats to families.

Louisiana participated in this national campaign by hosting two events: March 1 in New Orleans at Zephyr Field and March 2 in Baton Rouge at the Baton Rouge Community College. Nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs) were sought from across the state and signed up in unexpectedly high numbers. Most came on their own time, strictly as volunteers, and stayed for both events. Over 60 technicians helped out from Shreveport to Lake Charles to Delhi. Over thirteen hundred boosters were given away at these events. An additional 1,300 were distributed throughout the state by CPSTs over the next year.





New Orleans Boost America!  
event on March 1, 2002 at Zephyr  
Field

## Pedestrian Safety Bus Shelters

Louisiana SAFE KIDS, in partnership with Lamar and Viacom Outdoor Advertising, kicked off an innovative safety program which highlighted pedestrian safety during the summer of 2003.

As motorists drive by, as pedestrians walk by, and as bus travelers wait for their bus, they saw brightly colored bus shelters with pedestrian safety messages. Eighty-seven shelters were put up on Orleans, Jefferson and East Baton Rouge parishes.

Based on the success of the 2003 program, the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission funded a similar program for the summer of 2004. All participating advertising companies, Laurel, Lamar and Viacom are supporting the program with in-kind support.



Bus Shelter: Summer, 2003



Bus Shelter:  
Summer, 2004

# Overview: All Injury Risk Areas

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This progress report presents a picture of many of the injuries that kill Louisiana children. Unintentional injury causes more deaths of disease, homicide or suicide in Louisiana Children ages 1-14. Each section includes state and national statistics, costs associated with the injury area and how to prevent such injuries.

Unintentional injuries are the leading killer of kids in the United States. Each year, more children ages 1-14 die from unintentional injuries than from all childhood diseases combined. In 2001, 5,526 children ages 14 and under died from unintentional injuries. That same year, unintentional injuries resulted in 176,832 hospitalizations, more than 5 million visits to outpatient departments and more than 10 million visits to physician's offices. It is estimated that as many as 90 percent of unintentional injuries can be prevented.



This year, one in four (more than 14 million) children will be hurt seriously enough to require medical attention. An additional 120,000 children are permanently disabled. These injuries result in enormous financial, emotional and social effects on not only the child and their family, but the community and society as a whole. Unintentional injuries disproportionately affect poor children and result in more fatalities compared to children with greater economic resources.

## Cost Savings

- The annual lifetime cost of unintentional injury among children ages 14 and under is nearly \$303.4 billion, which includes \$18.3 billion in direct medical costs, \$21.3 billion in future earnings lost and \$263.7 billion in lost quality of life.
- For every child injured, total costs are more than \$12,700, including \$650 in medical costs, and more than \$1,000 in future earnings lost, and nearly \$11,000 in lost quality of life.
- Every \$1 spent on a child safety seat saves the US \$32 in direct medical costs and other costs to society.
- Every \$1 spent on a bicycle helmet saves the US \$30 in direct medical costs and other costs to society.
- Every \$1 spent on a smoke detector can save \$69 in fire-related costs.
- Every \$1 spent on poison control center saves the US \$7 in medical costs.

## SAFE KIDS & Prevention Efforts

- The National SAFE KIDS Campaign is the first and only nationwide nonprofit organization dedicated solely to the prevention of unintentional injuries to kids 0 to 14 years of age.
- The strategy for prevention includes the “five E’s: education, empowerment, environment, enactment and evaluation.
- Examples of programs in Louisiana include standardized child passenger safety technician trainings and local child safety seat check up events; legislative action (bicycle helmets and booster seats); public awareness programs (pedestrian safety bus shelter program, regular seasonal press releases); *Don't Kid Around* child occupant protection citizen surveillance program(1995-2002); bicycle helmet mini-grant distribution (2002-2004); and numerous SAFE KIDS Campaign programs such as *Defeat the Heat*.

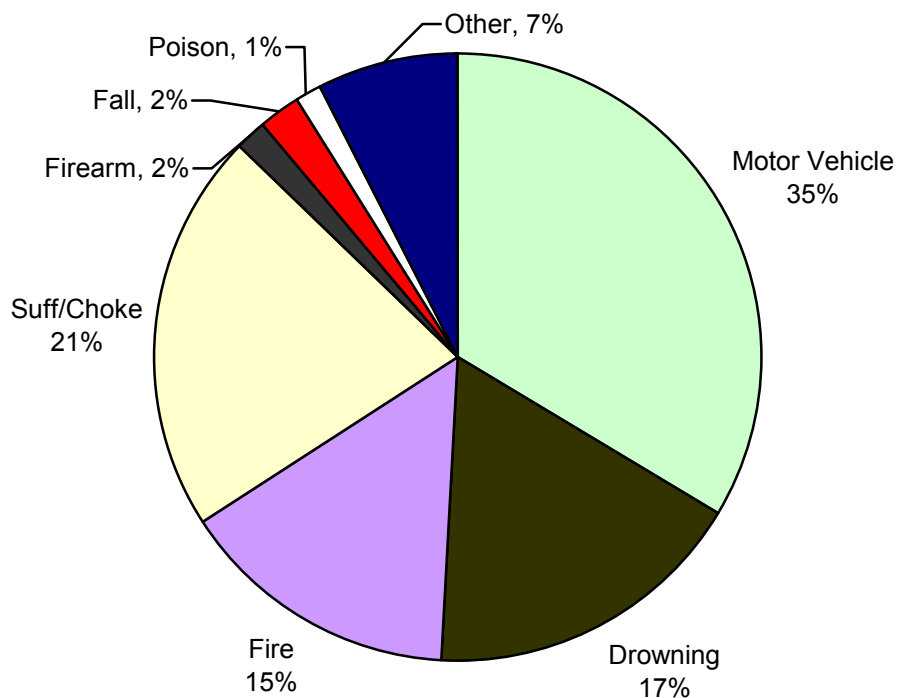


Kerry Chausmer, Exec. Director, Louisiana SAFE KIDS, Inc. with C. Everett Koop, Former U.S. Surgeon General at 2003 National SAFE KIDS Coordinator's Conference



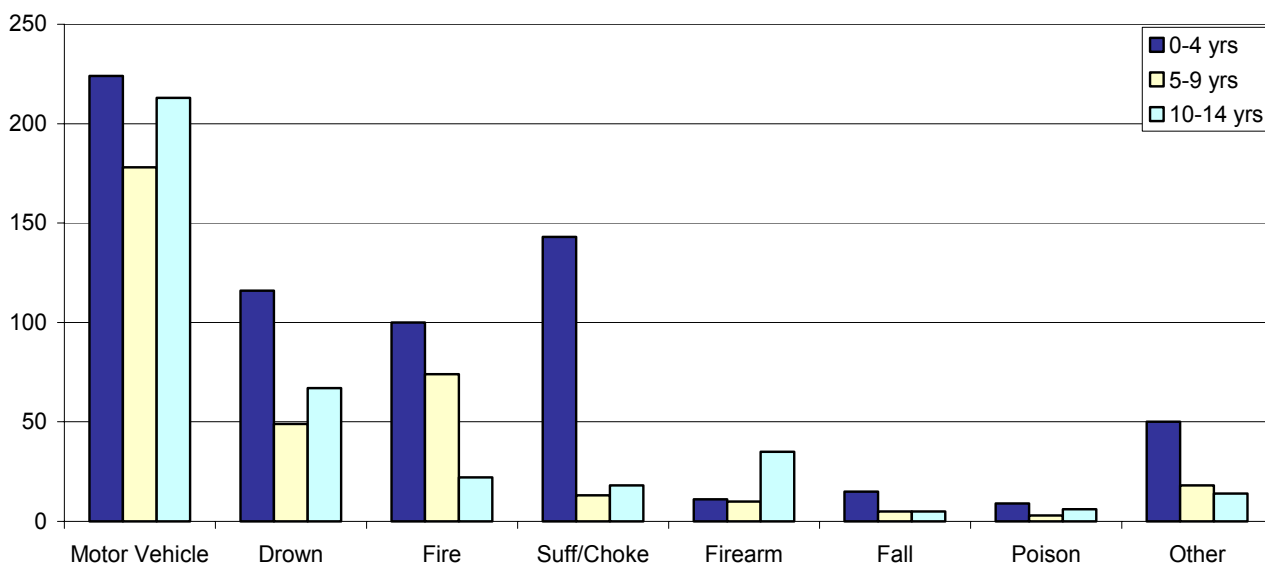
## Unintentional injury deaths by age group

Louisiana, 0-14 years, 1994-2002 N=2036



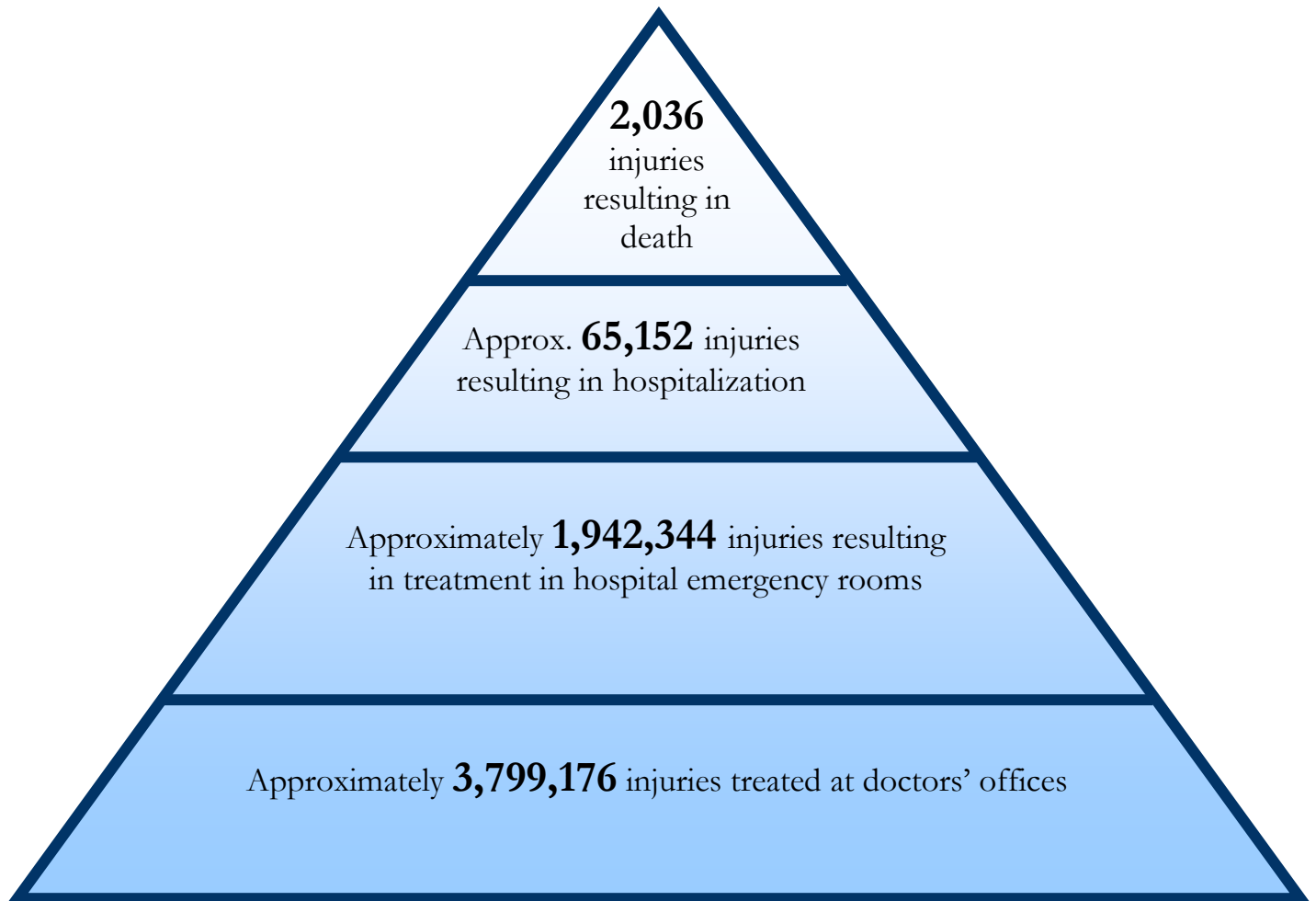
## Unintentional injury deaths by age group

Louisiana, 0-14 years, 1994-2002 N=2036



# 1994-2002 Unintentional Child Injury Pyramid

Louisiana, 0-14 years



Child injury pyramid reference: "Preventing Unintentional Injury Among Children." National SAFE KIDS Campaign, 2003



# Motor Vehicle Injury

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of unintentional injury death for all children less than 15 years of age. Injuries from motor vehicle crashes result in the largest number of years of life lost before age 65 and cost more than any other childhood injury. Motor vehicle crashes account for 35 percent of the total number of unintentional child injury deaths in Louisiana. The majority of motor vehicle deaths result from fatal head injuries, especially among the youngest children. Severe and serious nonfatal injuries, primarily brain and spinal cord injuries and facial disfigurement, have devastating effects on the child, the family, the community and society as a whole.



For front seat passengers, lap/shoulder safety belts have been shown to reduce the risk of death by 45% and injuries by 50%. Safety belts provide the greatest protection against ejection from a vehicle during a crash. Seventy-five percent of occupants who are totally ejected from passenger vehicles during crashes are killed.

**Buckle Up!** Research shows that nearly 40 percent of children riding with unbelted drivers were completely unrestrained, compared to only 5 percent of children riding with belted drivers.

Louisiana has a primary child restraint enforcement law, meaning a driver can be pulled over for child restraint violation.



Use of child restraints improves survivability in a crash, but maximum protection is compromised by incorrect installation in the vehicle, the child not correctly secured in the seat, or using an inappropriate restraint (selection). Although 96 percent of parents believe they install and use their child safety seats correctly, it is estimated that approximately **9 out of 10 child safety seats are not used correctly**. Studies indicate that inappropriately restrained children are nearly three and a half times more likely to be seriously injured in a crash than their appropriately restrained counterparts.

## Deaths, Injuries & Cost Savings

- In 2001, 1,579 child occupants ages 14 and under died in motor vehicle crashes.
- In 2002, an estimated 227,000 children ages 14 and under were injured as occupants in motor vehicle-related crashes.
- In 2002, 22 percent of all U.S. traffic deaths among children ages 14 and under involved alcohol.
- From 1994-2002, 615 Louisiana children 0-14 died in motor vehicle crashes.
- Over one-third (36%) of Louisiana children killed in car crashes were less than 5 years old. Two-thirds (65%) were 9 years old or younger.
- In addition to physical trauma, motor vehicle injuries can have long-lasting psychological effects. One study showed that 25 percent of children who suffered from traffic injuries, and 15 percent of their parents, were later diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- In a crash at 30 miles per hour, a 10 pound infant will be ripped from a belted adult's arms with a force of about 300 pounds.
- For the US, the total annual cost of motor vehicle occupant-related death and injury exceeds \$25.8 billion for all children ages 14 and under.
- Every dollar spent on a child safety seat saves this country \$32.

## Child Safety Seats Save Lives

- If all child passengers less than 15 years old were properly restrained properly, it is estimated that more than 600 US lives could be saved and 182,000 injuries could be prevented annually.
- Correctly installed and used child safety seats reduce the risk of death by 71% for infants, 54% for toddlers, and reduce the need for hospitalization by 69% for children under 5 years old.
- At recent safety seat check up events, 9 out of 10 Louisiana families were using their child's safety seat incorrectly—either using the wrong type of seat, installed the car seat incorrectly in their vehicle or had problems securing their child in the car seat.



## Prevention

- **Kids ride in back** - Infants in rear facing child safety seats should NEVER ride in the front seat of a car or truck with an active passenger side airbag. Children under age 13 should ride buckled up in the back seat whether or not there is a front seat passenger airbag.
- **Child safety seats** - Young children and infants should always ride in age and size appropriate child restraints. The safety seat should be properly held in place by the safety belt or LATCH system. The child should be correctly buckled into the safety seat. A child who has outgrown a forward facing harness (usually 40 pounds) should move into a belt-positioning booster seat until the car or truck's safety belts to fit properly without the extra boost, usually about 80 pounds.
- **Wear both lap and shoulder belts correctly** - The shoulder strap should cross the collarbone and the lap belt should fit low and tight on the hips. The shoulder strap should never be slipped behind the back or under the arm.
- **Move the front seat back** - Drivers should position the vehicle seat as far away from the dashboard as is practical to drive safely, at least 10" from airbag. Drivers should also make sure the front passenger seat is pushed back as far as possible.



# Louisiana's Child Passenger Safety Law

Effective 1/1/2004 Act 1238

Age/Size	Restraint Use
Birth to at least 1 year and less than 20 pounds	Ride rear-facing in an infant or convertible seat
At least 1 year and at least 20 pounds to 40 pounds	Ride forward facing in convertible or combination seat (used with the internal harness)
At least 40 pounds to 60 pounds or at least 4 years old to 6 years old	Ride in a belt positioning booster seat (backless or high backed)
At least 6 years old or at least 60 pounds	Ride using the vehicle lap-shoulder belt or belt positioning booster seat

- ✓ **Convertible seat:** May be used rear facing (5-30 pounds) or forward facing to 40 pounds
- ✓ **Combination seat:** May be used forward facing with internal harness to 40 pounds, then the harness is removed and it may be used as a belt-positioning booster with vehicle lap-shoulder belt to 80/100 pounds
- ✓ **A child who because of age or weight can be placed in more than one category shall be placed in the more protective category.**
- ✓ **If there is an active passenger side airbag, the child shall ride in the back seat, if a back seat is available.**
- ✓ **Always read car seat instructions (for specific wt/ht limits) and vehicle instructions for installation guidance.**



# Home Injuries



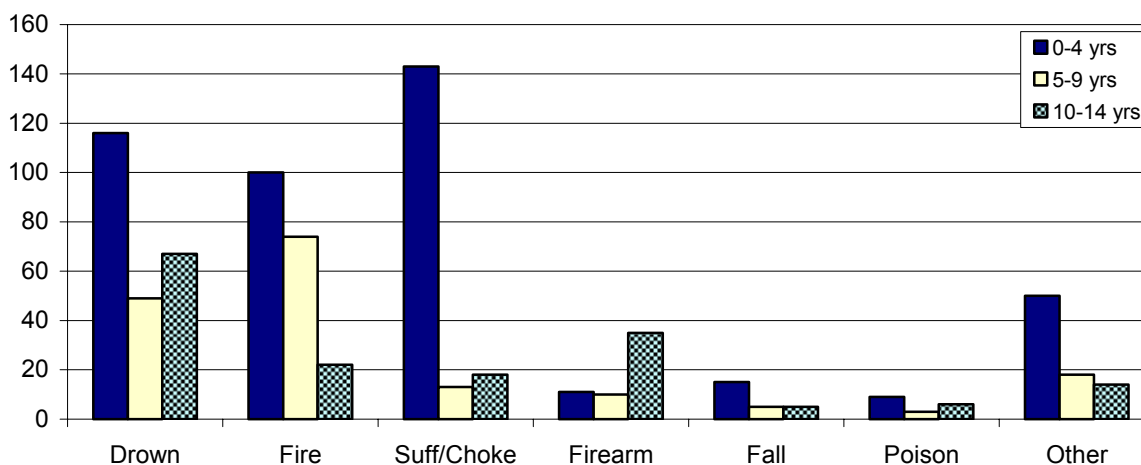
Home injury deaths have many causes, including drowning, fire, falls, poisoning, choking and suffocation, and unintentional use of guns. Young children are at the greatest risk because they spend most of their time in the home.

Each year, more than 4.5 million children under age 15 are treated in hospital emergency departments for injuries incurred in the home. Nearly two-thirds of all injuries among children under age 3 requiring emergency department visits occurs in the home. Conversely, one-third of the injuries among children ages 12 to 14 requiring emergency department visits occur in the home.

In 2001, approximately 2,500 children ages 14 and under died from unintentional injuries occurring in or around the home.

## Non-Vehicle-Related Unintentional Injury Deaths

Louisiana, 0-14 years old, 1994-2002, N= 783



## Prevention

### Airway Obstruction

- Keep all possible choking hazards, such as inappropriate toys, out of reach of young children.
- Keep all plastic bags and containers out of reach.
- Keep round, hard food like grapes, popcorn, nuts, and raisins out of children's reach. Also keep coins, safety pins, jewelry, buttons and other small objects out of children's reach.
- Inspect old and new toys often for any damage or loose parts. Throw away or fix broken toys right away.
- Be sure cribs meets national safety standards - look for a JMPA certification label. Remove pillows, comforters, toys and other soft items from the crib.
- Never allow children to wear necklaces, purses, scarves, or clothing with drawstrings on playgrounds to prevent strangulation.



- Tie up all window blind and drapery cords or cut the ends and put on safety tassels.
- Never hang anything on or above a crib with a string or ribbon longer than seven inches.

## Drowning

- Watch children at all times and never leave them unsupervised in or around water.
- Never allow older children to watch younger children.
- Have safeguards and barriers around pools and keep toilet lids closed.
- Close bathroom doors and drain tubs and showers all the way immediately.
- Never leave buckets of water or wading pools unattended.
- Teach children how to swim --but never think this exempts proper and adequate supervision.

## Fire & Burns



- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home and in every sleeping area.
- Test detectors once a month, replace every 10 years, and replace batteries once a year
- Never remove the batteries in any smoke detector--if one goes off when you cook, it may be too near the stove. Consider installing detectors with a “silence” button.
- For the best protection, install both ionization detectors (flaming fires) and photoelectric detectors (slow, smoky fires).
- Plan and practice several fire escape routes from every room in the home and identify a safe meeting place.
- Lower the water heater to 120° to help prevent scald burns.

## Falls

- Block off stairs with a gate and use window locks and guards.
- Never leave children alone on a chair, couch, table, porch, balcony or other elevated surface.
- Use corner protectors on square or rectangular furniture

## Poisoning

- Keep *all* poisons, such as cleaners and medicines, locked and out of children’s reach.
- Identify plants in and around the home and assess risk of poisoning.
- Keep the number to LA Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) on all phones.



## Unintentional Firearm

- Always store unloaded guns and bullets in different places! Don’t just hide them -- lock them up and out of reach of children! This includes BB and pellet guns.
- Teach your children that guns are not toys. “Never touch a real gun!” is a good rule. Be extra careful if you allow children to play with BB, pellet or other toy guns.
- Always store guns unloaded in a locked, inaccessible location with trigger locks.
- Are there guns in homes where your children play? Find out. Ask if they are always kept locked up and unloaded.

**Teach your children how and when to call 9-1-1.**

# Fire and Burns



From 2000-2002, Louisiana fire departments responded to over 47,000 fires, totaling over \$452 million in loss and damages. Smoke alarms are extremely effective at preventing fire-related death and injury. Residential sprinklers, escape plans and fire extinguishers are also effective at preventing fires and reducing risk.

Nationally, the total annual cost for fire and burn-related deaths and injuries for children under 15 years of age is approximately \$11.9 billion. Every dollar spent on a smoke detector can save \$69 in fire-related costs.

Smoke alarms are extremely effective at preventing fire-related death and injury. The chances of dying in a residential fire are cut in half when a smoke alarm is present. Residential sprinklers, escape plans and fire extinguishers are also effective at preventing fires and reducing risk.

## Deaths & Injuries

- In 2001, 493 U.S. children under age 15 died in residential fires. Half (54%) of these children were under 5 years old.
- Each year, nearly 40,000 U.S. children under age 15 are injured by fires in the home.
- More than 70 percent of all fire-related deaths are from smoke inhalation, caused by dangerous gases produced as fires develop and spread. Burns are responsible for 25% of fire-related deaths.
- Nationally, home cooking and heating equipment are the leading causes of residential fires and fire-related injuries.
- Children aged 5 and under, represent 9% of the population but more than 17% of all fire-related deaths in the home. They are more than twice as likely to die in a fire than the rest of the population.

### Louisiana

- From 1994-2002, 196 Louisiana children under 15 died from fires. Half of these deaths were children under age 5.

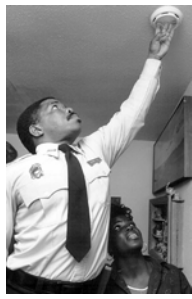
## How & When Fire Injuries and Death Happen

- A working smoke alarm is not present in two-thirds of the residential fires in which a child is injured or killed.
- More than 43 percent of residential fire-related deaths among children under age 10 occur when the child is trying to escape, unable to act, or acting irrationally. Only 1 in 4 households have developed a fire escape plan.



## **Prevention** *There is a 50 percent chance of surviving a residential fire when a working smoke detector is present.*

- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home and in every sleeping area.



- ✓ One detector in a short hallway outside the bedroom area is usually adequate. Hallways longer than 30 feet should have one at each end.
  - ✓ If you mount your detector on the ceiling, be sure to keep it at least 18 inches away from dead air space near walls and corners.
  - ✓ If you mount it on the wall, place it six to 12 inches below the ceiling and away from corners.
  - ✓ Never place them any closer than three feet from an air register that might recirculate smoke. Don't place them near doorways or windows where drafts could impair the detector operation. Don't place them on an uninsulated exterior wall or ceiling.
- Check your smoke detectors once a month, change the batteries once a year, and replace all smoke detectors after 10 years.
  - Never remove the batteries in any smoke detector--if one goes off when you cook, it may be too near the stove. Consider installing detectors with a "silence" button.
  - For the best protection, install both ionization detectors (flaming fires) and photoelectric detectors (slow, smoky fires).
  - Plan and practice several fire escape routes from every room. Identify a safe meeting place outside of the home.



# Poisoning



The childhood unintentional poisoning death rate has declined over the past 10 years, largely due to the use of child-resistant packaging, product reformulation, heightened parental awareness and appropriate intervention by poison control centers and health professionals. Children with their natural curiosity, tendency to put things in their mouths, and faster metabolic rates, are at an increased risk of poisoning.

In 2002, an estimated 111,870 US children under 15 years old were treated in hospital emergency rooms for unintentional poisoning. Every dollar spent on Poison Control Centers saves this country \$7 in medical costs. In 2001, 96 US children ages 14 and under died as a result of unintentional poisoning. Louisiana had 18 children less than 15 years old that died from unintentional poisoning from 1994-2002.

Poison risks extend beyond medicine and household poisoning to environmental lead and carbon monoxide.

## How & When Poisoning Injuries and Death Occur

- Nearly 90 percent of poison exposures occur in the home.
- Calls to Poison Control Centers peak between 4 pm and 10 pm and during the warmer months

## Prevention



- Keep all poisons, such as cleaners, medicines, alcohol and cosmetics, locked and out of children's reach.
- Carefully read and follow directions and give medicines to children based on their weights and ages.
- Never refer to medicine as candy.
- Keep the number to Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) on all phones.
- Test children for lead exposure and test homes built before 1978 for lead-based paint. Wash hands and toys often to reduce exposure to lead.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in every sleeping area at least 15 feet from fuel burning appliances.
- Be sure space heaters, furnaces, ovens and other gas-burning appliances are vented properly and inspected annually.



**POISON**  
**Help**  
**1-800-222-1222**





# Airway Obstruction: Suffocation and Choking

For children less than a year old, choking, suffocation and strangulation injury is the leading cause of unintentional injury death. For children under age 5, it is the third leading cause of unintentional injury death in Louisiana. These injuries occur when a child's airway becomes blocked and they can't breathe. Children, especially those under 3, are particularly vulnerable because of their smaller upper airways, relative inexperience chewing and their natural tendency to put things in their mouths.



## Deaths & Injuries

### United States

- In 2001, 864 children ages 14 and under died from airway obstruction injuries. Of these children, 87 percent were ages 4 and under.
- In 2001, 695 children ages 14 and under died from suffocation, strangulation and entrapment.
- In 2001, 169 children ages 14 and under died from choking (30 percent on food). In 2001, more than 17,500 children were treated in emergency rooms for choking-related episodes.
- In 2002, eight children ages 2 to 11 and under died from choking on a toy or toy part; three involved balloons. Sixty-two percent of the toy-related deaths involved suffocation or asphyxia.

### Louisiana

- From 1994 to 2002, 174 Louisiana children died of airway obstruction. Additionally, an estimated 5,568 were hospitalized and 166,000 kids visited emergency rooms because of airway obstruction.

## How & When Airway Obstructions Occur: Nationwide

- The majority of childhood **suffocations**, **strangulations** and **choking** occur in the home.
- Sixty percent of infant **suffocation** occurs in the sleeping environment.
- Each year, cribs and “play yards/pens” are involved in just over half of all nursery product-related deaths among children ages 5 and younger.
  - Cribs are responsible for 26 **strangulation** and **suffocation** deaths each year.
- The majority of **choking** deaths are associated with food items such as hard candies, hot dogs, nuts, grapes, carrots and popcorn. Risky non-food items include balloons, coins and small balls.
- Common **strangulation** risk items include clothing drawstrings, ribbons or other decoration, necklaces, pacifier strings, and window blind and drapery cords.

## Prevention

- **Always supervise small children while eating and playing.** Keep round, hard food (grapes, popcorn, nuts, raisins) and coins, safety pins, jewelry, buttons and other small objects out of children's reach.
- **Make sure kids play with age-appropriate toys according to safety labels.** Inspect old and new toys often for any damage or loose parts. Throw away or fix broken toys right away.
- **Place infants on their backs or sides on a firm, flat crib mattress.** Be sure cribs meet national safety standards (JMPA certification). Remove pillows, comforters, toys and other soft items from the crib.
- **Remove all hood and neck drawstrings from children's clothes.** Never allow children to wear necklaces, purses, scarves, or clothing with drawstrings on playgrounds to prevent strangulation.
- **Tie up all window blind and drapery cords or cut the ends and put on safety tassels.** Never hang anything on or above a crib with a string or ribbon longer than seven inches.

# Unintentional Firearm Injuries

Unintentional shootings account for nearly 20 percent of all firearm-related fatalities among children under 15, compared with 3 percent for the entire U.S. population. Americans possess nearly 200 million firearms, including 65 million handguns. An estimated 39 percent of all homes in the United States have some type of firearm, and 1 in 4 homes has a handgun. Gun owners keep firearms in the home for hunting and recreation (60 percent) or for protection and crime prevention (40 percent). Guns in the home for protection are more likely to be handguns, found in a home with children, and stored loaded and unlocked.



Unrealistic perceptions of children's capabilities and behavioral tendencies with regard to guns are common, including misunderstanding a child's ability to gain access to and fire a gun, ability to distinguish between real and toy guns, make good judgments about handling a gun, and consistently follow rules about gun safety.

## Deaths & Injuries

- From 1994-2002, 56 Louisiana kids less than 15 years old died from unintentional gunshot wounds. More than one-third were children less than 10 years old.
- In 2002, more than 800 children under 15 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for unintentional firearm-related injuries. Approximately 35 percent of these injuries were severe enough to require hospitalization.
- The unintentional firearm injury death rate among children under 15 in the United States is nine times higher than in 25 other industrialized countries combined.
- In 2002, nearly 8,500 children under 15 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for unintentional nonpowder gun-related injuries (e.g., BB guns, pellet guns).

## Costs

- The total annual cost of unintentional firearm-related deaths and injuries among children under age 15 is more than \$1.2 billion. Children ages 5 to 14 account for more than \$1 billion, or 83 percent, of these costs.
- Among children under 15, unintentional firearm-related injuries account for half of the total cost of all firearm injuries: homicide, suicide and unintentional firearm injuries together
- Hospital treatment for a firearm-related injury averages between \$7,000 and \$15,000+ per case.

## Prevention



- Always store guns and bullets in different places! Don't just hide them -- lock them up! This includes BB and pellet guns.
- Teach your children that guns are not toys. "Never touch a real gun!" is a good rule. Be extra careful if you allow children to play with BB or pellet guns. Families can be devastated by a "toy" gun injury.
- Always store guns unloaded in a locked location. Use trigger locks.
- Are there guns in homes where your children play? Find out. Ask if they are always kept locked and unloaded.

# Traumatic Brain and Spinal Cord Injury



Brain injuries, unlike other types of injuries such as broken bones, do not heal. Damage to the brain is lifelong and generally irreversible. Brain injuries occur in car and bike crashes, falls, sports, and gun mishaps. The only “cure” for a brain injury is prevention.

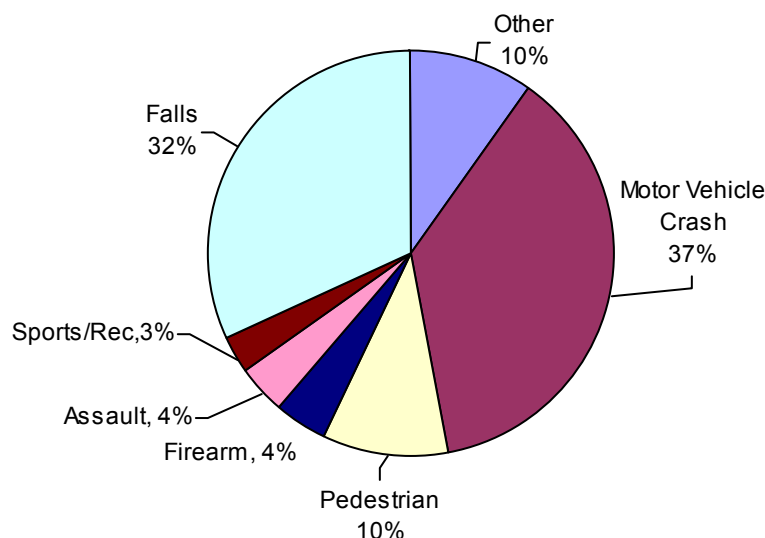
Prevention includes proper use of bicycle helmets, safety seats, seat belts and other protective equipment.

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) accounts for one-third of all injury deaths in the United States. The total number of head injuries each year is conservatively estimated at 2 million with 500,000 serious enough to require hospital admission. For many who suffer from traumatic brain injuries, the outlook is poor. Each year, approximately 70,000 to 90,000 face a lifelong debilitating loss of function, 5,000 will develop epilepsy, and 2,000 will live in a persistent vegetative state.

## Injuries & Costs

- In 1999, 673 of Louisiana’s children age 14 or younger sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI) or spinal cord injury (SCI) (659 isolated TBI’s, 11 isolated SCI’s and 3 combination TBI/SCI’s).
- Louisiana’s overall TBI/SCI rate of 67.4 per 100,00 for 1999 was higher than 1998’s rate of 50.5 per 100,000. This rate remains substantially lower than the all ages rate in LA, which is 98.4 per 100,000.
- ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET: Of the thirteen children under age 13 included in the TBI/SCI registry from bike crashes, none were reported to be wearing a helmet at the time of injury.
- BUCKLE UP: Only one-third of children under age 5 with TBI &/or SCI from motor vehicle crashes were known to be wearing a safety belt or safety seat. None were assessed for correct use.
- Estimates of the annual direct and indirect costs to society range from \$12.5 to \$37.8 billion. The National Head Injury Foundation estimates that the cost of care for one person with severe brain injury may be as high as \$9 million during that person’s lifetime.

**External Cause of TBI/SCI of Children 14 and Under  
Louisiana, 1999 (N=673)**



## Prevention



- Lap/shoulder safety belts are effective in reducing the risk of death to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45% and injuries by 50%.
- Correctly installed and used child safety seats reduce the risk of death by 71% for infants, by 54% for toddlers, and reduce the need for hospitalization by 69% for children ages 4 and under.
- Bike helmets have been shown to reduce the risk of brain injury by almost 90%.
- Use proper protective equipment, including helmets, when skating, biking or scooting.
- Always jump in “feet first the first time” into a pool, lake or other body of water. Never dive in first!

